

In fact, I know people who are making \$6 and \$7 an hour that work at airport security, and some of them actually have left to go work at McDonald's because it pays better. Instead, we should federalize airport workers and security workers at the airports. They should be paid a living wage, they should be paid health insurance, they should be paid other benefits, and they should be trained better so they are there for a long time and they will do their job.

Why should we continue this failed system of airline security, of airport security, all in the name of a conservative ideology? Mr. Speaker, it is time we believe in shared sacrifice. It is time we federalize the airport security people, that we build a tax system fair to all people, and that we take care of workers laid off and victimized by the events of September 11.

HONORING THE PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED AND THOSE THAT WORK WITH THEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, recently the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) took a Special Order honoring Rush Limbaugh, who is undergoing a hearing loss. Many people are unaware and/or indifferent to those who experience physical infirmities, including deafness and blindness. When celebrities become affected, however, attention is focused on the celebrity, as well as the infirmity or disability. Fanny Crosby, the beloved hymn composer, was visually impaired, as are entertainers Doc Watson and Ray Charles. Helen Keller overcame blindness as well as deafness.

Many are prone to dismiss deafness as a mere inconvenience when compared to other infirmities. I have a personal familiarity with the hearing impaired, Mr. Speaker. My mom has been legally deaf most of her adult life. My first cousin at the time of her retirement served as superintendent of the North Carolina School for the Deaf.

Several years ago, while motoring in North Carolina on a Sunday morning, I was listening to the Lutheran Hour on the automobile radio. The host, Dr. Ozzie Hoffmann, was discussing physical infirmities. He said if offered a choice of losing the sense of sight or the sense of hearing, most people would opt to retain their vision. The host of the program then presented an interesting aside. Blindness, he noted, removes the visually impaired from objects and things; deafness, he declared, removes the hearing impaired from people.

Oftentimes persons who have impaired hearing are mistakenly accused of being unfriendly or aloof, when the truth of the matter is their deafness, as

Dr. Hoffmann indicated years ago, has removed them from people. Their skills for communication, Mr. Speaker, have been adversely affected.

My mom was an outstanding parent and wife, despite having been deprived of normal hearing. Rush Limbaugh, hopefully, will not be removed from contact with his vast listening audience.

Finally, permit me to urge my colleagues in this House and in the other body as well to be consciously aware of difficulties encountered by those who are visually and hearing impaired. We who enjoy normal vision and hearing oftentimes take these luxuries for granted.

These are indeed luxuries which we should not embrace casually, and those who do not enjoy these luxuries deserve a tip of our hats for the extra effort they are required to expend to make it through life. Most of the blind and deaf people I know are upbeat, optimistic and rarely bitter as a result of their infirmities. They are indeed unsung heroes and thoroughly deserve our admiration and respect, as do the men and women who work with the visually and hearing impaired to make their lives more complete and more fulfilled.

ENFORCING AIRLINE SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, it has been 7 weeks since the attacks, and the House of Representatives has yet to consider one bill relating to aviation security enhancements. Not one.

Two weeks ago the Senate passed a bill 100 to zero, nothing passes the Senate 100 to zero of any substance, 100 to zero; yet this House has failed to take up that or any other measure, because of one item in disagreement: Who should provide the critical screening function for baggage, carry-on bags and individuals passing into the secure areas of the airport? Should it be the private sector, as the majority whip and the majority leader say, or should it be a Federal law enforcement-national security function provided by competent, well-paid, professional Federal law enforcement personnel, the same way we do INS, Customs, and even agriculture inspection? Those are Federal law enforcement agents.

But somehow, when it comes to the security of the public traveling on airplanes, no, they get second-class treatment. They get security on the cheap. The majority wants to maintain the status quo, which is failing them miserably.

Guess what? That same majority has not mandated that we put private security firms at the doors of the Capitol. If they feel so good about this and if they can provide such a great service, why

do they not do that? Because they are mindful of protecting themselves. But they do not care quite so much about the traveling public. They care more about their political sponsors.

Let us look at who the political sponsors are here. There are three foreign owned, hear that, foreign owned huge companies that do most of the private airport security in the United States; and one of them, Securicor of Europe, threatened last week to sue the United States Government if we usurp their function at the airports.

Let us look at how their subsidiary is doing in the U.S. Their subsidiary is Argenbright, one of the three largest security firms providing airport security to more than 40 major airports in the United States of America, including Boston's Logan, Washington's Dulles and others.

Well, they have got a few problems. They were criminally convicted just a year ago of hiring known felons, maintaining known felons on staff, falsifying documents as to the screening and training of the known felons that they had hired. At Dulles Airport, 84 percent of their workers are foreign national; but, they assure us, most of them are legal immigrants. "Most."

Most? This is extraordinary, and this is the system that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) want to perpetuate under pressure from these generous firms. They are generous. Their U.S. subsidiaries can contribute to campaigns, and they do, generously.

Now, let us talk about how they are going to resolve the problems. They do admit it is a little bit of a problem that they are hiring and maintaining known felons on staff; that FAA inspectors are able to get hand grenades, fully assembled guns and other things through the security; that many, many other lapses have been noted. Most notably, last weekend a gentleman was on a Southwest Airlines plane with a fully loaded gun in his briefcase which they had not noticed. They noticed, when he got up to altitude and told the pilot. It was nice of him to do that. But the security screening people from the private firm did not notice the gun.

Now, so what the majority says is well, look, we will make it better. We will have Federal regulations. Well, guess what? We have got Federal regulations now. They are ignoring them. They are ignoring them to the point where they are about to be criminally convicted, in terms of Argenbright, for the second time.

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But not removed. But forbid we would remove them from doing this function and fail the American traveling public.

They say they will also mandate wages, not usually something the Republicans want to do. So they say they will mandate wages, they will mandate benefits, they will mandate, and the Federal Government will conduct